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Social Progress

The Minister's Role in Social Education and Action

DECEMBER 1955

Social Progress

Published by the Department of Social Education and Action of the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to provide a forum for the Church on subjects of social concern for Christians. It includes program resources, legislative developments, and guides to worship, study, and action for leaders of social action groups in local churches, presbyteries, synods, presbyterial and synodical societies. Articles represent the opinions of the authors—not the official policy of the Department of Social Education and Action or of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A.

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Department of Social Education and Action: Clifford Earle, Margaret E. Kuhn, H. B. Sissel, Gayraud Wilmore; Helen H. Harder (Editorial Assistant), Helen Lineweaver (Director of Washington Office). Editorial correspondence should be addressed to Clifford Earle, Secretary and Editor.

Counseling Committee on Social Education and Action: Joseph J. Copeland, Mrs. Edward Fisher, Arthur W. Mielke, Henry Lee Willet, Frank T. Wilson, Chairman, Paul S. Wright; Mrs. Roland P. Beattie, Richard Pacini, Shelby Rooks; Walter H. Eastwood, John A. Mackay; Emery Bacon, Mrs. Werner J. Blanchard, C. Elwood Boulware, Herbert N. Brockway, William Adams Brown, Jr., Burton Fowler, Paul K. Justus, Paul Lehmann, Franc L. McCluer, Mrs. Harold R. Tolliver, Edmund S. Wolfe, and Willem F. Zuurdeeg.

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FROM THIS VANTAGE POINT . . .

The Minister's Role

THE key man in social education and action is the local minister. Seldom does a church go beyond his encouragement and leadership in dealing with social issues and community problems.

Most ministers are reasonably alive to their responsibility in this phase of the Church's witness. They need no help in discerning the everyday relevance of Christian truths and the practical meaning of Christian ideals. They feel that the Church ought to do something about the social forces that bear upon the lives of people, which often make it hard for men and women to be the kind of persons God wants them to be. Rarely does one find a clergyman today who says that community problems are no concern of the Church.

Our conception of the minister's role in social education and action derives from the "philosophy" that every part of the church's ongoing program should be involved. The witness of the Church and the duty of Christians in relation to social issues should be emphasized in

- the pastor's sermons,
- the selection and training of church officers,
- the education of leaders including church school teachers,
- communicants' classes, including the instruction of adult new members,
- the entire program of Christian nurture,

- the program activities of the church, including men's work, women's groups, young adult groups, young people's fellowships,
- the church's influence in the community.

Many ministers go from pastorate to pastorate without taking time to think through and set down definite goals for their lifework. They do not ask such questions as, Why am I here? What am I attempting to do? What do I want my influence to be? What are God's purposes for my life and ministry? These questions should be faced with humility and with honest self-evaluation appropriate to the high calling of the Christian ministry. It is so easy for a minister to be caught up in a maelstrom of expediency and frustration—attending committee meetings, invoking God's blessing at teas, scrambling for next Sunday's sermon—without a definite plan for his life or a deeper purpose. In these pages some ministers may find a clue to greater usefulness and more purposeful service in the Kingdom.

If the minister's preaching, teaching, pastoral work, and community influence are to be really relevant to the problems of the world, and if he is to feel compassion and to understand truly the tragedy of human existence, he has to expose himself to the issues of life as they are known and felt by people around him. Social insight is existential. Books on public affairs are useful, but book knowledge is not enough. Unless there is conscious effort on the part of the pastor to identify himself with the people among whom he walks, as well as with those who are not of his immediate flock, he may find that his ministry, and consequently the church he serves, have little relevance to life.

The story is told of a missionary (not Presbyterian) in Africa who lived with and ministered to the Bantu people for over a quarter of a century without learning their language. A visitor who understood the language overheard a group of these people talking about the missionary while he was speaking—ridiculing him and countermanding his words.

How can a minister be an effective leader in Christian social relations unless he knows the language of the people among whom he lives and works?

—Clifford Earle
Margaret Kuhn
H. B. Sissel
Gayraud Wilmore

The Man in the Pulpit

It is not surprising that many ministers think of their social action role primarily in terms of preaching. However, preachers are sorely tempted to overestimate the power of preaching to produce action, or even to change minds on social questions. When a preacher girds and delivers himself in denunciation of social iniquity, it is often a moving experience for himself alone.

We need to know much more than we do about how social attitudes are formed and changed, and how people are stirred to act. We do know that sermons are not enough. Still they are the minister's unique opportunity for social witness.

Q. How can a minister's preaching be *relevant* to the world in which the congregation lives without becoming simply a series of "lectures" on politics, economics, race relations, or what have you?

A. By his keeping ever before him and uppermost in his mind the *primary*, "this-above-all" responsibility of the Christian preacher, which is the repeated proclamation of "the mighty acts of God" and the summoning of man and society to respond meaningfully and intelligently both to the "acts" themselves and to the expression of them.

Q. You mean the preacher is to speak only about the history of Israel, the coming of Christ, and man's need for salvation, as these are recorded in the Bible?

A. Take out the word "only," assume that God's sovereign activity continues today in all areas of life as it did in Biblical times, make the gospel really full as did the prophets and Jesus himself, and you are making a gesture in the direction of what we are talking about.

Let's consider some things that are *not* the preacher's job, and then some things which are only *part* of his job.

Q. Well, what are some of the things that are *not* his job?

A. The preacher's job is *not* issue-hunting. Once in a while issues will press in upon him demanding homiletic attention. If he is at all sensitive, if he does any reading outside the fields of theology, homiletics, counseling, and church administration, he will have as his problem *avoiding* constant "issue-centered" preaching—not *seeking* issues.

His job is certainly *not* hobby-horse-riding, i.e., using his pulpit as a constant sounding board for voicing his concern about the *one* "problem" he happens to feel strongly about (alcohol, for example, or race relations, or labor unions).

His job is *not* "propheteering"—people certainly need guidance in evaluating the forces and movements of our times and acting responsibly toward them and within them, but they also have personal problems and individual needs.

His job is *not* "iconoclasting." He must help tear down idols, to be sure, but this will not be his exclusive concern. There is a temptation to be purely negative and destructive toward evils and toward goods elevated to objects of worship, but again, this is not a full-time job. Having pointed out the idols and having attempted to tear them down, let the minister also direct his attention and that of his people to the living God, his judgment and mercy.

Q. But should a minister *never* seek to be a prophet, or an iconoclast? Should he *never* preach on social issues? Is there no such thing as a good "SEA sermon"?

A. Sometimes the sensitive pastor will not, in good conscience, be able to avoid preaching on a social issue (although too many ministers seem to be quite successful at consistently avoiding them). The point is that he will do it out of an inner compulsion to speak God's word to a crucial issue that cries out for attention. (Remember how the *Letter to Presbyterians* was invested with meaning because of its *timeliness*, and the cruciality of the issue to which it spoke. In a sense, that which makes a message timeless is its very timeliness.) It is difficult to say which does the Church more harm—a consistent pattern of keeping silent when it ought to speak out on specific issues, which makes it irrelevant and dead, or a consistent pattern of exclusive attention to social issues, which makes it marginal and shallow. Suffice it to say that the minister who says to himself, "I will preach about the UN next Sunday," usually ends up with something that is neither a good sermon, *nor* a good lecture on the United Nations.

Q. Then what should the minister *do*, bearing in mind all these things he should *not* do?

A. He should regard the Bible as his basic textbook, and see it as his business to make the Biblical message, which is essentially one, speak not only to individual persons but to what the Evanston Report calls "the patterns and groupings of society." But he will have to remember that the twentieth century world is a radically different expression of human life and human society than the Biblical world. The preacher's task is still to interpret God's law as God's law, and God's judging and saving action as God's action. But he will

have to remember that, although the *content* of such disobedience as idolatry, blasphemy, theft, adultery, murder, or covetousness (after the Decalogue) are always the same, the *form* of this disobedience in the twentieth century is different. And he will have to remember that, although God still judges and saves, creates and destroys, warns and reassures, nevertheless he uses different *means* to accomplish these things today.

Q. Are we not in danger of identifying "the law of God" with "our way of life"?

A. There is a sense in which one can preach about "the law of God" as interpreted from within a particular economic or social framework so that it is not actually the law of God one preaches, but the standard by which a particular class or race seeks to preserve for itself the goods, the power, and the privileges of its position.

For example, "We must, *above all else,* preserve 'order,' 'decency,' and 'sobriety.'" Which is to say, "We must preserve those things upon which *our* security most depends." The spokesman for a disinherited class or group might well see other values—such as courage, sacrifice, and passion for justice—as the higher goods. The Church and the preacher can never identify God's judgment with the judgment of the group they happen to be in.

Q. What about "peace of mind"?

A. "Peace" may easily be seen by the preacher as the most meaningful symbol of God's salvation—peace of mind, peace between striving groups, world peace. In a particular time and set of circumstances this may be a valid judgment; yet it is entirely conceivable that for individual persons today, as for groups and nations, the only "peace" possible at this moment is of necessity a counterfeit symbol of God's mercy. It may well be that salvation comes from God today to the individual as the ability to endure constant inner tension, to groups as the ability to deal creatively with controversy, to the nations as the ability to engage in conflict without mutual destruction.

Q. Then there is no *one* way in which a minister can preach good "SEA sermons" or make his sermons relevant to the whole of life?

A. No. We have to recognize the necessity, on occasion, to preach on social issues. But we have to guard against making this a continuous thing. Our preaching will be most relevant when we see it from the Biblical perspective as the proclamation of who God *is,* what he has *done* (particularly in Jesus Christ), what he *is doing* (in our own lives, in our homes, in our community, in China, in economic and social forces, in the UN—in short, in all areas of life),

and what he *will do* if there is repentance or if there is no repentance. This necessitates a knowledge of the record of "the mighty acts of God" as recorded in the Bible, tied to a sensitive and informed knowledge of what is going on within us and in "the patterns and groupings" of the world in which we live. This is at least a closer approximation to preaching the "full gospel" than an exclusive concern with either the next life, or the inner life of individuals, or the social order.

Q. How "obvious" should a preacher be in dealing with social questions?

A. On the whole, "concerned" preaching is best when it is not obvious. That is, repeated references to the social application of the gospel in sermons that are not addressed specifically to social issues are perhaps more effective, and carry people farther, than occasional homilies about the social responsibilities of Christians. Indeed, some outstanding leaders in this field seldom preach "social action" sermons.

Teaching the Teacher

What happens in the church school can carry forward or countermand what the minister says in the pulpit. His teaching and preaching should influence every part of the church's program of Christian nurture.

The minister's role is to see that the session takes reponsibility for setting up standards for teachers. He will be alert to see that leaders who have sensitivity and a broad social understanding are at work in the church school.

Church school teachers should understand the Church's tradition in Christian witness. They should know about the pronouncements and be aware, in general at least, of the positions taken by our Church. They should be familiar also with the literature that interprets the social concerns of Christians. The Faith and Life curriculum clearly affirms the importance of discipleship in every area of life, but its teachings cannot be communicated unless the teachers are themselves convinced that the Church must be prophetic.

Leader of Leaders

The 1955 General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A. directed one of its important "social pronouncements" toward the minister and his responsibility in church officer training: "We call upon every local church, through its minister and leaders, to give appropriate attention to social education and action. It is the minister's responsibility to see (1) that the session and other church leaders form a vanguard in Christian social education and action, and (2) that resources and leadership are provided to stimulate a continuing church-wide emphasis."

Q. Why is it important for church officers to know about social education and action?

A. It should be obvious that church officers, particularly elders, ought to have a general knowledge of the entire program of the Church, including social education and action.

Church officers often express happy amazement when they hear for the first time that the Church is trying to do something useful about some of the tough problems in community and national life. This is an aspect of the Church's program about which the local leaders ought to be deeply concerned and fully informed. But how can they be so unless the minister tells them and helps them to understand?

An articulate member of a local session who is *not* aware of the Church's concern with social issues is in a position to frustrate and defeat an attempt to establish a program of social education and action. We know that this has happened in a great many churches. It is possible also for a powerful but "untrained" trustee of a local church to obstruct the program.

In one church, for example, a trustee stopped the distribution of the social pronouncements of the General Assembly. Later it was discovered that he knew nothing about the General Assembly of our Church, that he thought the pronouncements came from the General Assembly of the United Nations, and that he belonged to a "patriotic" organization which was against the United Nations.

In all this we do not mean to insist or even suggest that every church officer must agree with the idea that the Church should engage in social education and action, or

with the positions the Church may take on certain issues. What is important is that every officer should know he is in the kind of Church that is concerned with social problems and is not afraid to take positions on sensitive issues.

Q. What about the selection of church officers?

A. The standards and traditions of our Church are clear enough concerning the kind of men and women who should be elected to positions of high trust and influence as elders, deacons, and trustees.

Even so, we dare to encourage the selection of church officers who represent a variety of occupational interests and political points of view. Nothing is more deadening than a lack of diversity in social outlook among the members of a church board or committee (or, for that matter, of a congregation).

It should be understood by every church officer, of course, that he is not to "use" his office as a means of furthering a political movement or an economic theory to which he is devoted. In the service of the Church he should lay aside the various "hats" he wears in secular life. Indeed, if he is unwilling or unable to do so, he really ought not to be a church officer.

Q. How can social education be introduced in meetings of church boards?

A. Here are a few suggestions:

1. Many churches hold planning conferences or "retreats" for church officers (and other leaders) at the beginning of the church year, usually in early September. It is important to include in the agenda such matters as (*a*) social concern in the Presbyterian tradition, (*b*) the General Assembly pronouncements on current social issues, (*c*) our church's influence in the community, (*d*) social education and action in the ongoing program.

2. The first half hour or forty minutes of every meeting of a church board (session, deacons, trustees) can be devoted to "church officer training." This plan is followed in a great many churches, and we commend it. The social witness of the Church could be included in these discussions.

3. Significant "actions" of the presbytery, of the synod, and of the General Assembly, including resolutions and pronouncements expressing social awareness and concern, can be presented and discussed in regular meetings of the church boards, or in special meetings when a matter is urgent or deserves extended consideration. A great many of these "actions" are really addressed to the local church, or involve its concurrence for effective implementation. It would appear to be the inescapable duty of the minister to bring them to the attention of his church officers.

Two cases in point: (*a*) the concluding section of the social pro-

nouncements of the 1955 General Assembly dealing with "the local church," and (*b*) the recommendation of the General Council concerning the implementation of the concept of "an inclusive church," adopted by the 1955 General Assembly and transmitted to presbyteries and churches for concurring action.

4. Where there is a local church committee on social education and action (functioning perhaps as a subcommittee of the Christian education committee and having a member of the session as its chairman), the committee can report regularly, through its chairman, to the session and also, on occasion, to the board of trustees and the board of deacons. These reports can be made in such a way as to help the church officers to have a clearer understanding of this phase of the Church's work.

Q. What literature can be used?

A. In addition to handbooks and manuals for church officers and materials for church officer training published by the agencies of our Church, we would suggest three items especially useful in helping church officers to come to grips with social education and action:

1. The social pronouncements of the General Assembly. These appear, usually, in a summer issue of *Presbyterian Life.* They are published also in the July issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS and thereafter in a free pamphlet which can be secured in quantity for distribution among church officers and leaders.

2. SOCIAL PROGRESS, a monthly (except August) magazine of social concern published by the Department of Social Education and Action. It is possible for a church to receive a number of copies in one mailing every month at a considerable reduction in subscription charges, or to secure "club" rates for a number of individual subscriptions going to separate addresses. We would earnestly recommend that every church officer become a reader of SOCIAL PROGRESS. See the back cover for rates.

3. *Social Action in the Local Church* is a 40-page "manual" which every minister will find useful in the "social education" of his church officers. The chapter headings suggest the pamphlet's scope: "The Social Outreach of the Church," "Social Issues Confronting the Church," "Training for Discipleship in the Regular Program," "Organization and Leadership," "From Concern to Action," "Beyond the Local Church." It is published by the Department of Social Education and Action and is available from the Presbyterian Distribution Service (25 cents). Every church officer ought to have a copy.

Q. How can the "pronouncements" be used?

A. We have already suggested that they should be in the hands of every

church officer and should be "reviewed" in meetings of church boards.

Often the minister will be the one to present the pronouncements and to lead the discussion of them. He may, however, ask one or two members of the session (or of the social education and action committee) to present them. Or he may ask the social education and action secretary of the local women's organization to do so, realizing that she may be better informed and more enthusiastic about this phase of the program than anyone else in the church. Or he may bring in someone from outside the church, such as the chairman of presbytery's committee on social education and action or a member of General Assembly's committee.

What is important is that the members of the church boards should know about the pronouncements. They may disagree with some of the positions taken by the Church in General Assembly actions. That is always their privilege, but it is good for them to appraise the pronouncements and to weigh the pros and cons of the Church's positions.

Q. Should the minister have the support of his church officers in dealing with social issues?

A. He should certainly have the support of some of them and usually should seek to "involve" all of them. He is in a bad strategic position (or posture, as it is sometimes called) if he stands alone in facing a social issue, particularly in his own community.

A minister should assume that his church officers, at least some of them, will be on his side. No minister should be diffident about seeking their support in trying to do something about the stubborn issues of community and national life. He may find them much more ready than he realized to tangle with social issues.

Q. What special training in social education and action is available to church officers?

A. In general, the same opportunities for "advanced training" are open to church officers as to ministers. We mention the following:

1. Lectures, forums, discussion groups, and courses related to social problems or to the social witness of the churches are available in many communities.

2. In many Christian education summer schools, such as those sponsored by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church, there are both basic and "advanced" courses on social education and action.

3. Many church officers attend citizenship seminars in Washington and United Nations seminars in New York. A number of these seminars are sponsored by the Department of Social Education and Action.

Program Counseling

Another key group of leaders in the church are the men and women who are involved in the ongoing program—Sunday church school leaders, officers of various organizations for men and women, advisers in the youth program, members of divers church committees. These people, too, ought to be convinced and informed regarding the social concerns of the Church.

The minister will want to give them about the same treatment he gives the church officers in relation to social education and action. The General Assembly's social pronouncements, for example, can be distributed among them and discussed in a church-wide workers' conference.

It is the minister's unique opportunity to advise the leaders with regard to the social education and action phases of the church's program. Much can happen to make this emphasis vital if the minister gives the right kind of encouragement and counseling.

Q. We assume that every pastor has a concern for making his congregation sensitive and alert to the church's role in the total life of the community (local and world-wide). How does he express this concern as an administrator in the local church?

A. We refer, of course, to the continuing program of the church—the activities it carries on in addition to the regular Sunday worship. The minister's "social concern" very decidedly affects his work in relation to these activities, which is mainly that of program counseling.

In a rather ideal situation, which exists in very few churches, there are trained and functioning committees working in all areas of the church's program. The minister's job as an administrator just about boils down to seeing that these committees have the latest and best (not always the same) materials to use, and use them, and that their work is coordinated and integrated so that there is *one* program, not six or eight. He is usually the principal "idea" man and resource person for these committees. They need his constant encouragement and guidance.

In a less well-organized church, where the session most likely endeavors to oversee the program without using a number of functional

committees, the minister should seek to work directly as a program adviser with the leaders of the various organized activities.

In general, we can say that the minister should see to it that all groups carry on a complete and well-rounded program in which social education and action (as well as evangelism, Christian nurture, missionary education, and the like) are given appropriate attention.

Q. How can the minister influence the activities of the church without being a dictator?

A. Instead of a long and complicated answer, let us refer to two ways in which the minister can exercise real leadership.

First, the minister can do a great deal through leadership education. This is sometimes a formal process with regular classes and courses of study, but it is more often a matter of informally "exposing" the church's leaders to experiences and events (including reading materials) by which they become more capable and skilled in their leadership.

Secondly, the minister can also influence the church's program through the opportunities he has to advise leaders about their programs. In most churches organizational leaders are constantly turning to the minister (sometimes at the last minute) for help and counsel. This gives him the opportunity to suggest subjects, speakers, book reviews, panels, or films, even on short notice, dealing with social issues and problems that he would not ordinarily consider dealing with in detail from the pulpit.

Q. Is this direct, unorganized program counseling the best arrangement?

A. Perhaps not, but it's better than nothing. And the minister's reading, his acquaintance with church and secular resources, his association with and knowledge of community agencies will make it possible for him to see that various groups in the church draw upon these sources for programs in the areas of social concern at least occasionally. We need to recognize that in many churches there is no long-range program planning, no co-ordinating of the various types of programs into a meaningful whole, no well-thought-out purpose for each program by itself or for the total program as a unity. Until this long-range planning, co-ordination, and integration take place, probably the best we can hope for is direct program counseling by the minister to see to it that the programs of the various groups at least make some place for social concern in their stated meetings. However, such a catch-as-catch-can arrangement is far from one to be satisfied with.

Q. How could such a makeshift setup be changed and improved upon?

A. This is primarily the responsibility of the session, which means that the minister must, either by

himself or through some other person or persons of prestige, sensitize the session to the need for fulfilling this responsibility. There are many ways of doing this, and the minister who sincerely wants to see it done should try to use as many of them as possible.

Q. What are some of these ways?

A. Well, in terms of having a planned, co-ordinated, purposeful program *in general* there are such things as annual or semiannual planning retreats of church officers, using such resources as *Christian Education in Our Church* (available from the synod Christian Education Field Director); the creation of a committee on Christian education (a part of whose responsibility is social education and action); the creation of a social education and action committee, using the manual *Social Action in the Local Church* (available from the nearest Presbyterian Distribution Service).

In terms of *specific* ways of getting a concern for social education and action before the session and into the ongoing program of the church, a pastor could do such things as getting the church to send one or more of its most influential session members (*and* pastor) to one of the many public affairs seminars each year, or to a presbytery SEA institute, or to a summer leadership training school to take social education and action courses.

Q. Suppose, for financial or other reasons, these are all impossible, then what?

A. There are still other ways, and they should be used along with the above, or instead of the above, if necessary. Some sessions spend the first half hour of every meeting reading and discussing their way through the General Assembly pronouncements or one or more of the various pamphlets available from the Department of Social Education and Action, such as the *Letter to Presbyterians, The Camel and the Needle's Eye, Every Church and Evanston, Segregation on Sunday.* Other groups besides the session can do the same thing. In fact, it would be safe to say that there must be at least four or five people in even the smallest church who would find the continuing study of their faith and social issues more stimulating and interesting than planning next month's refreshments.

Q. But won't this get the session and other groups into controversial issues and lead to dissension in the church?

A. It will certainly get them into controversial issues sooner or later (preferably not immediately), since this is the only kind of *issues* there are. It will probably lead to the expression of diverse and conflicting opinions. But it need not lead to dissension (if you mean by that ill will and alienation from each other) if the ground on which such discussion takes place is repeatedly

shown to be, and pointed out as, Christian love, and the purpose of such discussion is clearly understood to be not the persuasion of others to a particular opinion, but the mutual search for the truth.

Q. But many ministers are afraid of controversy, aren't they?

A. Well, many ministers, and laymen too, would prefer not to have controversy in the church. We know, however, that very little learning or growth takes place in persons unless they are forced to examine their attitudes and opinions by having them challenged by those of others. If there were time and space in which to do it, it could probably be shown that where no diversity of opinion and point of view are *expressed*, no growth, and hence no significant action, takes place in or by the church. As someone has said, it becomes "an aggregate of contented cows." What makes controversy dangerous is to have it take place over the wrong *issue*, at the wrong *time*, on the wrong *ground*, and in the wrong *atmosphere*. (Some would add, "by the wrong *people*.")

Q. In the typical church, what is the best way the minister can use all the SEA program materials that come to his desk?

A. He will, of course, make a quick evaluation of their worth in the ongoing church program (see page 30) out of his knowledge of the groups in which the materials can be used. Usually a brief perusal of a pamphlet's contents (he can hardly read every word in every piece) will suggest the appropriate program officer to whom it should be sent. A note suggesting possible uses should accompany the pamphlet. Sometimes telephone or face-to-face program counseling is indicated. Such counsel is also essential to the continuing growth of the church's leaders.

Books and pamphlets may be placed in the church's library and described in the weekly bulletin.

Q. Who has a more crucial role than the minister in determining the content of a church's program?

A. No one. And as far as social education and action are concerned, if they don't happen in the local church at all, it's usually because the minister hasn't really wanted them to occur. He can't *control* who gets nominated for various offices, but his counsel (and frequently his persuasive power) is usually sought to fill vacancies. He can't *determine* what the program will be, but again his advice is frequently asked for. He can't, by himself, *make* the "atmosphere" of a local church, but he plays a major role in conditioning and changing it. He can't simply create various committees and study groups by himself, but usually they don't get created if he doesn't initiate them.

"Concerning" New Members

Our Presbyterian heritage and its historic concern for freedom and justice should be a matter of pride for every Presbyterian. Faithful interpretation of Presbyterian polity and theology to new members and communicants' classes requires very basic discussion of the social responsibilities of Christians, and the study of our Church's prophetic witness in the world.

If the church is to be an influence in the community and affect the world in which we live, it can do so in part through the minister's witness and the way in which he takes leadership in public affairs. But its deeper impact will be made through the concern and action of its lay members.

Q. Why is it important to introduce new church members to social education and action?

A. It is important for the new members of our churches, and old members too, to know that Christian faith is relevant to "the issues of life," that Christians are expected to honor Christ in every area of their living, that political and social matters are not out of bounds for the church because the church is interested in everything that affects the lives of men and women and children, that the Presbyterian Church has a record for being outspoken and forthright in dealing with social problems and issues, even the most "sensitive" and controversial.

It would seem to be a great mistake not to let the new members of our churches, particularly new adult members who come by letter of transfer from other Churches which are not as alert to social issues as the Presbyterian Church, know the kind of Church they are joining. Some Presbyterian laymen and not a few ministers are uneasy and unhappy, perhaps vociferously, when they read the pronouncements of the General Assembly year after year or when the General Council or some other agency of the Church issues a communication such as the Presbyterian *Letter* of the fall of 1953. They would not be "surprised" by these statements on controversial themes if they understood and appreciated our Presbyterian heritage. By and large, Presbyteri-

ans have always believed that the Church should take part in the struggle for freedom and against every denial of human rights and human dignity. We have only to recall the work of Calvin in Geneva, of Knox in Scotland, of Witherspoon in America at the time of the Revolution, and of others like them in every decade of the unfolding story of Presbyterianism, to know how truly this is part of our tradition.

Q. Where does the "social education" of a new member begin?

A. It begins with the very first conversation a representative of the church, minister or layman, may have with a prospective new member, in what the "caller" says to the prospective new member about the character of the church he is invited to join.

It is obviously wrong to suggest to a newcomer in a community that he should become a member of such and such a church because it is the leading church in the community with all the best people in it. Indeed, it is downright misleading to appeal to newcomers on such superficial grounds. Evangelism requires that we speak to prospective members on the basis of their relationship to Jesus Christ, their need of the Church, their participation in the Christian fellowship, their relation to the wider redemptive mission of the Christian community.

All this suggests the importance of the proper training of the persons who take part in the church's program of evangelistic calling in the community.

Q. What place does social education have in the work of the communicants' class?

A. We can only say that social education has a place in the curriculum of the communicants' class along with other subjects such as the Bible, the meaning of discipleship, cardinal Christian beliefs, the history and polity of the Presbyterian Church.

It would seem to be important to help the members of the group to understand something of why the Church is concerned with social issues and of how the Church deals with them. Ordinarily there would not be time for the group to discuss the issues themselves.

New materials for communicants' classes, now being prepared by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., will not neglect the "social education" of new members.

In many churches, communicants' classes take field trips, sometimes quite extensive, to visit projects and institutions sponsored by the Church. This can be a very effective way of helping young people, and adults too, to understand what the Church is doing in the field of social witness and service.

Q. What about training sessions for adult new members?

A. Many churches require adult new members, even those coming into the church fellowship by letters of transfer from other churches, to attend two, three, or more "training sessions" under the leadership of the minister. Social education should certainly have a place in the "agenda" of these sessions, along with such things as Church doctrine, polity, and program.

It would be useful to give to every member of such a training group, indeed to every adult new member of the church, a copy of the social pronouncements of the last General Assembly. It is still appropriate to give to each new member also a copy of the Presbyterian *Letter* issued by the General Council in November, 1953.

Every new adult member of the church should read also a copy of the Report of Section VI of the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches, dealing with the work of laity. An interpretation of this outstanding statement could well be the "order of the day" in one of the training sessions for new members.

Q. What should be stressed in the "social education" of new members?

A. The "social education" of new members should be simple and elementary rather than exhaustive. We suggest these three emphases:

1. Every Christian is expected to be sensitive to human need wherever it exists and whomever it affects. Christians "more than others" should feel the sufferings of men and women who have been hurt by war or poverty or discrimination or exploitation of any kind or by the calamities of nature, and should be ready to do all they can not only to relieve the suffering but, even more, to remedy the condition that brought it about.

2. Followers of Christ are expected to carry their Christianity over into the realm of daily work. This is a new frontier of Christian responsibility and adventure. We need to know more about the ethical dilemmas men and women face in various occupations and the kind of behavior that is expected of Christians as they make "on-the-job" ethical decisions.

3. Christians are citizens, and being a Christian means being a Christian citizen. The church through its members, and as a corporate body, ought to be an influence for good in the community and beyond. This can happen only when the church's members understand and accept their responsibilities as Christian citizens.

Q. How can new members become involved in the social education and action aspects of the church's program?

A. Here are two or three suggestions:

First, new members can be brought into the groups in the church in which social education and action are going on—the young adult organization, the women's association, a local chapter of Presbyterian men, an alert Bible class or service organization. We should remember that social education and action ought to occur in the ongoing program of the local church—not as a separated and isolated activity for a few "interested" persons, but as a regular and properly emphasized feature of the program of all of the church's organizations.

Secondly, persons with special skills which may be used in the church's program of social witness and outreach should be given the opportunity to serve. A class of new adult members in a church will often include such persons as teachers of one or another of the social sciences, members of Alcoholics Anonymous, persons with special training and experience in industrial relations, social workers, leaders of a local voters' league or some other nonpartisan political education project, leaders of farm organizations, students of international affairs, and persons holding public office. So far as they are able and willing to be active, the church would do well to use them as resource persons in the ongoing program, or even to involve them in social action projects in which their abilities may be utilized to the full

Thirdly, a church often has liaison relationships, formally or informally arranged, with various community organizations doing work that merits the support and encouragement of the Christian community. New members may be asked to help represent the church in these community groups, along with more experienced members of the church. Indeed, one of the most effective ways for the church to radiate an influence in the community is the strategy of working in and through reputable and responsible community organizations by means of carefully selected liaison representatives.

The Ministry to People

We are interested in social issues because of what they do to people. Our concern is with persons.

In his "pastoral" relationships, a minister should be aware of the bearing of social and economic forces upon the daily lives of men and women. Indeed, it would seem that a minister cannot be a good pastor without being deeply sensitive to human need in broad social terms.

Out of pastoral concern comes the best Christian social action.

Q. Wouldn't a minister's intense concern about social issues tend to make him less effective as a pastor? For example, if he spends all his time running from one community agency to another and gets mixed up with politics and race relations and housing, wouldn't this take him away from his people and decrease the pastoral services he can render to them?

A. It *could* make him a *better* pastor (and a better preacher too). After all, the *people* of the church are "mixed up with politics and race relations and housing" and several other social issues and forces whether they are aware of it or not. As a matter of fact, it would be a misunderstanding of many personal problems that require pastoral counseling to regard them as purely intrapersonal or intrafamily or "spiritual" problems, divorced from the social, economic, and political milieu in which the individual lives or works. To be sure, any minister whose community or "SEA" activities are so time-consuming as to take him away from his pastoral duties had better either curtail some of those activities or else seek to render his professional service in some field other than the pastoral ministry.

Q. Give an example of how a personal or family problem is affected by social, political, or economic forces.

A. A simple and obvious one might be that of a man who has serious trouble with drinking, not because of family or personality problems, but because of an on-the-job factor that he cannot or will not recognize. Another might be that of an insecure white homeowner who (erroneously) feels economically threatened by the fact that Negroes are moving into his neighborhood, or a

nonwhite mother who is tremendously worried by the thought of what may happen to her children as they begin to go to a previously all-white school.

One could go on and on with other examples. The point is that the pastor who has something better than a book acquaintance with the political, economic, and social forces and structures that impinge upon his people will be the better able to understand and counsel with them.

Q. How should a minister deal with the problems mentioned and others like them?

A. This is a question for the "experts" in pastoral counseling if a detailed answer is sought. However, he should be sensitive enough to spot such quasi-personal disorders as intense fear or prejudice toward other racial groups; highly exaggerated political or economic bias; insecurity, guilt, or anger that cannot be expected to heal completely until some economic or social factor (such as job insecurity or bad housing) is alleviated or at least seen in a different light.

The pastor should further recognize that, although factual information may help resolve socially—or economically—oriented personality or family disorders, it probably is insufficient of itself. As with all pastoral counseling, the understanding of what is at stake, what factors are involved, is necessary for effective counseling, but no guarantee of "success." Patience, empathy, permissiveness, the eschewing of censorious, judgmental, or authoritarian attitudes on the part of the counselor, are as important here as with any other human relationship.

Q. How is what you have just said different or unique from all other counseling situations?

A. In this sense, perhaps: many personality or family problems involve questions of ethics or morals, at least in the mind of the troubled person. In a relatively simple society with a comparatively uncomplicated economic system, ethical questions are confined rather neatly within the sphere of personal morality. Today this is frequently not so; guilt, the universal aspect of the problems of troubled people (and of those apparently not so troubled), is often rendered ambiguous and formless by its *social* implications. Many people evidently feel deeply guilty (and perhaps rightly so), not because they have violated any known taboo of personal morality, but because they participate in the corporate life of so many social, economic, and political communities. Not to understand, or at least appreciate, the nature of this sense of corporate guilt (hardly ever recognized by the troubled counselee) is not to comprehend his problems.

Q. How about an example?

A. One pastor was called to counsel with an officer of a local labor union (it could as well have been a corporation executive, or a lawyer, or a lathe operator), who was facing what he considered to be a major crisis in his life—whether to give up his career as a union official and return to the work he had formerly done. He was a devout Christian.

As he talked to the pastor, it appeared that he was caught in one of those ethical dilemmas in which he had been forced to make a choice between two alternatives, neither one of which was "right" according to a traditional code of personal morality. By avoiding any premature judgment, and by letting the man know that he was understanding the various relationships in the story he was telling, the pastor was able to help him see his problem whole, rather than fragmented as before. His anxiety lessened considerably as he was able to see more clearly the irresponsible alternative to the course he had chosen. He didn't convince himself against the facts that he wasn't guilty, but rather he saw that he could admit his guilt, still maintain his integrity, and claim the grace of a God of compassion. Had the pastor's understanding been more superficial, or had he shown a judgmental attitude from a partial perspective, a Christian might have abdicated a highly responsible position, and developed severe personality disorders as well.

Q. Are you saying that a pastor can't help a person unless he understands completely the social and economic milieu in which that person lives and works?

A. No, but some understanding certainly is an important weapon in the battle. In addition, a pastor's knowledge of community agencies is sometimes essential for securing professional assistance of a legal, medical, or welfare nature that he is incapable of rendering himself.

Q. What about the use of prayer in counseling situations such as the ones you've been describing?

A. Well, people who are SEA-oriented have no special wisdom relative to prayer that is not available to everyone. Perhaps the June, 1955, issue of SOCIAL PROGRESS ("Prayers of Concern") might be useful in this connection—but only if the counselee seems desirous of prayer. Personally, we have often questioned the use of prayer by eloquent churchmen as a kind of bludgeon against laymen who may be relatively defenseless in the face of such an "attack." But now we're getting on thin ice. Let's leave it there.

Community Outreach

"Our churches still struggle with the question, 'Who is my neighbor?' Their outreach, which should extend to the far corners of the earth, begins with the local neighborhood.

"It is important for churches to join forces with other institutions and agencies, as well as with other churches, in community planning and in serving various community needs—so long as such co-operation does not compromise the Church's position in its witness and purpose." (From the social pronouncements of the 1955 General Assembly.)

Q. Why should the minister be interested in the community and its affairs?

A. Because his church does not exist in a vacuum. Its survival and growth are bound up with the community and with the social forces that operate in the community. Every church worthy of its name has a unique witness in the world in which it "lives and moves and has its being." When the church gets all wrapped up in its own vested interests to the exclusion of everything outside itself, it has ceased to be the church!

Sometimes a minister does not get concerned about community relations until some phase of his church's program is at stake. He swings into action only when a beer joint opens across the street, or when the local transit company threatens to change the Sunday bus route, or when a low-income housing project may affect the property values of his parishioners. Too often ministers are able to get together only to deal with a "moralistic" issue such as banning objectional literature from the newsstands, instead of the deeper problems such as stopping the spread of urban blight or improving the quality of rural education.

A minister may feel that he nobly fulfills his responsibility in social action when he takes part in community fund campaigns, serves on a hospital board, acts now and then as chaplain for the city council, accepts a committee assignment in the parent-teacher association, speaks to the rotary club, or leads a delegation to talk with the mayor about the location of traffic lights. All this extraclerical activity is useful, but much more is required of a minis-

ter if he is to guide the church in asserting a wide and deep influence in community life.

Q. Presbyterian ministers are busy men. Can't they rely on presbytery for community studies and programs of action?

A. If they do, they are missing the point that every particular congregation should be a radiating center of influence in its own community. When a presbytery goes into action on a wider community problem, it is really a case of the local churches joining forces in dealing with an issue that they all recognize and feel in common. It is important that the churches themselves be involved and feel themselves to be part of the united action.

In our Presbyterian system, *all* ministers and *all* congregations share in determining the denominational strategy for a particular area.

Q. How can the minister know more about the community or get to know his way around in a new community?

A. Many ministers have become oriented to the community by interviewing certain key people—newspaper editors, executives of the health and welfare council, local labor leaders, leaders of minority groups, leaders in farm or business associations. When a new minister arrives, he may ask men in his congregation to introduce him to the key persons in the town. He should certainly accept invitations from civic groups and service clubs to attend their meetings, and let it be known that he comes to learn and listen, with genuine interest in the community and the common good, not just to add to his flock and increase the prestige of his office.

Every minister needs to know the social structure of the community, the organizations and the people who are respected (and why they have status), and the "power" groups and the people who really run the town (and how they work through respected groups to achieve their goals). Every minister needs to see where his own church fits into this structure of power and prestige.

Q. To what extent should a minister support "worthy" causes in the community?

A. That depends pretty much on the person himself. Generally speaking, a minister may be expected to support the causes in the community about which he can personally know and in which he can become personally involved.

Ministers may be expected to give their encouragement and help to worthy "social action" causes—movements and organizations with goals similar to those of the churches in such fields as race relations, housing, civic righteousness, world order, economic justice, human rights, temperance. Participa-

tion in these causes is proper as long as there are no compromise of the church's witness and no embarrassing associations. A contemporary example would be a movement to end racial discrimination in a municipal hospital, sponsored by the Civil Rights Congress, well known for its extremely "radical" connections. The cause of racial equality and fair play is a worthy one, but a minister would do well to withhold endorsement in this case until a more acceptable sponsor appears.

Q. But can't caution go too far?

A. Yes, this caution business certainly can be carried too far. One should take care in giving support to reform movements, but to be overly cautious may amount to putting one's influence on the side of the devil. Many churchmen are known for their Christian discretion and discrimination in encouraging worthy causes. To see their names on a list of sponsors is assurance of an activity's worthiness.

Q. What should a minister be expected to know about the community he serves? How can he proceed to study his community?

A. A minister should be interested in knowing everything he possibly can learn about the people of the community and the social forces that make it "tick." A prophetic ministry in the twentieth century is grounded in sociology as well as in the Scriptures. Such specific facts as these are essential and are no harder to collect than sermon material:

1. ***Facts about people.***
Population facts, trends, and changes may be found in census data, housing reports, block statistics, available from local planning commissions and housing associations as well as from the Federal Bureau of Census.

U.S. Censuses of Population and Housing, 1950, covers the following subjects: number of inhabitants, age, maturity, race and parentage, occupation, income, education, integration, characteristics of families and households, population per dwelling unit, description of housing facilities, plumbing, rent, real-estate value, number of TV sets, radios, refrigerators, etc.

A major source of information about farmers is the *U.S. Census of Agriculture,* published every five years and including valuable information about farms and farm activities under such headings as Farms: acreage, value, race and tenure of operation; farm facilities and equipment; farm labor; livestock and crops harvested; farms classified by value of product sold and by type and economic class.

There are also the *U.S. Census of Manufactures* and *U.S. Census of Business,* giving a wealth of information about number of employees, salaries and wage scales, products manufactured, trade.

Write to the Superintendent of Documents, Washington 25, D. C., for these free leaflets: *1950 Censuses of Population and Housing, Announcement 2, Final Reports, Block Statistics Bulletins,* and *1950 Censuses of Population and Housing, Announcement 4, Final Reports, Census Tract Bulletins, 1951,* to find out what data are available for your community.

2. *Facts about local history.*
Past events (floods, wars, fires, plagues) and economic conditions (new industries, opening of railroads, roads, strikes, discovery of natural resources) that made the community what it is today, can be studied in local histories and public records, letters of old residents.

3. *Facts of local customs and mores.*
Practices and customs of the past often affect present-day social attitudes and behavior, determine the social climate of the area, and give a community its distinctive character and solidarity. Some of these traditions cannot be ignored without peril.

4. *Facts about local government.*
Find who the political leaders, local magistrates, council members, police officers are; how various units of government operate, and how power is distributed among elected officials; how local government raises and spends its funds; primaries and election procedures; citizens' organizations. Facts about local politics can be best obtained by actively participating in one of the major parties and its caucuses, and by supporting planning commissions and organizations for good government, such as the League of Women Voters.

Q. How does the minister interpret the church to the community?

A. Many ministers have no determined course or program for influencing the community beyond the weekly newspaper announcement of services, occasional fifteen-minute broadcasts, or mailings of newsletters to members of the congregation. Although the "communications picture" is changing, studies show that most churches have developed few really good ways of communicating with the world outside so as to influence opinion. They are apt to speak and listen only to themselves.

Ministers usually are quick to see the value of newspaper and radio publicity, but they do not seem to understand the more important channels of communication by which basic social and political ideas are circulated from person to person. The impact of the local newspaper and of TV and radio programs is reinforced by the informal opinion-making processes—as personal problems and social issues are discussed with neighbors on the train to town, at the supermarket, over the family dinner

table, or during the coffee break in the office.

Here it is important to see not only *how* communication occurs but *what* aspects of the church's life and work are interpreted. Too often ministers play up what they think will impress others favorably. In a culture that stresses size and growth, and often judges success by newness and numbers, ministers are tempted to explain their work in materialistic terms.

Q. Should the minister speak out or keep quiet about hot issues in the community?

A. There is no simple answer. Many thoughtful Christians believe that organized religion has lost its force in the daily lives of people and communities because it has not been concerned enough with social issues. Ministers have too often been popular rather than prophetic. If a minister interprets the facts rather than general one-sided impressions of a controversial issue, he helps all concerned to be more objective and willing to work toward a proper solution. What the minister says about civil liberties, desegregated housing, or community health usually makes news, but he must make clear that he is prompted to speak to the issue because he is concerned for human justice and fair play.

Ministers should also realize that laymen can speak most effectively to some issues. The laity can and must speak for the church in places where the minister cannot be heard. But lay people can do so only if the minister has helped them to be articulate about what they believe, and to understand how faith involves social responsibility.

Q. How should the minister decide where to put his time and efforts?

A. Presbyterian ministers are known for their wide community interests and vigorous participation in local affairs. They take the lead in supporting councils of churches, councils of social agencies, and progressive health and welfare legislation. They serve on the boards of community agencies. They participate in education and action programs in the fields of family living, international affairs, race relations, and industrial relations. Often Presbyterian ministers are called upon to take a disproportionate share of the community load.

In serving the community and the church, the minister needs to analyze the functions and objectives of the agencies he aids. Here are some important questions to ask himself:

- What kind of community are we trying to build?
- How and where has my leadership actually changed or influenced local policies or opinions?
- Has my contact with such groups as service clubs and P.T.A. broadened their program?

- What am I doing to help community leaders in planning wisely for future social changes?
- Which efforts should have priority—those which relieve human distress or those which tackle the basic causes?
- What projects or services could be turned over to volunteers if we could recruit and train lay persons?
- What is my own church doing as a corporate body to develop a dynamic social action program?
- What help is my church giving to lay people in seeing beyond the individual ethic to the group ethic involved in all human relationships?

Q. Is there some particular phase of community relations that needs special attention from the minister?

A. Political scientists and sociologists are saying that rural as well as urban communities now suffer most acutely because of "unco-ordinated piecemeal planning." Areas of blight and spreading decay, traffic congestion, crowded bus routes, air and water pollution, lack of play and recreation space, poorly planned real-estate developments are largely the results of unco-ordinated community planning.

Rural areas also show the sad results of lack of planning with these and other symptoms: the depletion of the nation's soil and forests, pollution of streams, poorly planned housing developments on heavily traveled highways, lack of adequate school equipment.

Frequently a community will have three major types of planning: industrial development, land use, and health and welfare planning. These frequently go on independently of one another and actually operate to the detriment of the community. Our ministers who serve their communities in many roles have a special vantage point for seeing the need for co-ordinated planning and acting to bring the planners together. Frequently leaders in all three planning groups will be members of one congregation.

Q. If the minister has time to read only one book on community relations, what should that be?

A. *Studying Your Community*, by Roland L. Warren (available from Westminster Book Stores for $3.00). In twenty useful chapters written in laymen's language, a distinguished sociologist presents a working manual for the volunteer in every phase of community effort. Here's a book to discuss with church officers, with committees of social education and action, and in ministers' seminars. It provides excellent background information for leaders of groups using *The Church and the Community*, the discussion guide for Christian action prepared by the Department of Social Education and Action. ($1.00, from P.D.S.)

The Minister and His "Homework"

To "vegetate" means to grow in the fashion of plants. Applied to humans, and especially to ministers, it means to lead a passive existence without initiative or exertion of body or mind, to do little but eat and grow (in the sense of expanding).

This section assumes that no minister, at least none worthy of his calling, wishes to be accused of vegetating.

Q. What place should a minister give to "social education" in his reading?

A. That depends pretty much on the minister, although every preacher ought to give some place, sometimes a considerable place, in his reading to the social issues of the time.

Most ministers understand the importance of being well read, although too many of our preachers have fallen into the habit of reading only the daily newspaper, a weekly news magazine, and an occasional book of sermons for "usable" ideas. It is generally impossible for a minister who does not give time to serious reading to cover up the fact, except from others like himself who are unable to organize their lives so as to include daily sessions with important books and periodicals.

In his reading the minister should give attention to the several disciplines of his calling—theology, homiletics, counseling, the Bible, devotional literature, ecumenics, church administration, Church history, current and classical literature of general interest, current events, and social and political problems of concern to the churches. The attention he gives to any one field will depend upon many things, not least upon the subjective element of his own interest in a particular topic. Indeed, it is well for him to specialize in, let's say, theology or education or social action, but even so he will try not to neglect the other areas, particularly the important ones, in his reading and studying.

Q. What about the newspapers?

A. We think that every minister should be a regular reader of a *good* newspaper. By a good paper we mean one that (a) gives wide coverage and fair treatment to international and national news as well as to local events, (b) does not "play up" sordid and tragic local news, (c) has a high-grade editorial

page prepared by a competent editorial staff and reflecting the publisher's awareness of his responsibility as a mass communicator, (d) carries "columns" written by commentators and analysts who have the reputation of being reliable, consistent, and objective, (e) tends to be conservative or liberal without becoming reactionary or radical.

It is a sad truth that many large sections of our country do not have the service of what we would call a good newspaper. Many preachers across the country, because of the inadequacy of the local press, subscribe to the Sunday edition of *The New York Times* or receive daily airmail editions of such outstanding newspapers as *The New York Times*, the *Washington Post* and *Times-Herald, The Milwaukee Journal, The Saint Louis Post-Dispatch, The Little Rock Gazette, The Louisville Courier-Journal.*

It is always possible, of course, for the minister to encourage the editor and publisher of the local newspaper to give more attention to international affairs, to include more objective reporting of the work of the United Nations, to keep stories of "sin and sex" off the front page, to improve their editorial handling of local and national issues, to publish the "better" columnists.

Q. What periodicals will a minister find useful?

A. In these days it is not enough to read the newspapers. Events and issues are so complicated that we all need to turn to the experts for sound analyses of current national and world problems.

A weekly news magazine would appear to be a "must"—such as *Time, Newsweek, U.S. News and World Report,* although each of these periodicals, many believe, has some failing and must be read with a degree or two of care. For background articles many ministers find useful such periodicals as *The Reporter, Harper's Magazine, The Atlantic,* and *The Christian Century.* Many churchmen "swear" by *Christianity and Crisis,* a biweekly magazine of Christian opinion, edited by Reinhold Niebuhr and John C. Bennett. Stimulating articles on the social mission of the Church, with strong theological and Biblical orientation, often appear in such quarterlies as *Theology Today* and *Religion in Life.*

For the serious student of social problems we would recommend *The Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science,* published in Philadelphia. Churchmen who wish to concentrate on one area or another of social concern may wish to subscribe to a "specialized" periodical such as the *Quarterly Journal of Studies on Alcohol,* published at Yale University, and *Foreign Affairs,* published by the Council on Foreign Relations, Inc., in New York City.

Q. What books will a minister find useful?

A. In the broad field of Christian ethics and applied Christianity there are literally scores of good books, many of them of quite recent publication. An alert churchman will want to have personal acquaintance with two or three of the "basic" texts such as *Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy*, by George L. Thomas; *Religion in Crisis and Custom*, by Anton T. Boisen; *The Church and Social Responsibility*, by J. Richard Spann; and *Living Without Hate*, by Alfred Marrow (all available from the Westminster Book Stores). He will also try to keep abreast of present-day thinking about social problems and about the social witness of the Church through such useful books as *Common Sense and World Affairs*, by Dorothy Fosdick; *The Public Philosophy*, by Walter Lippmann; *Drinking in College*, by Selden D. Bacon and Robert Straus; *Guide to Community Action*, by Mark S. Matthews; and *The Nature of Prejudice*, by Allport, Gordon, and Cambridge (also available from the Westminster Book Stores).

In one's reading it is important to include books on the Biblical and theological aspects of social action as well as treatments of social policies and of current issues. Dare we suggest that a minister ought to read at least one of each of these two kinds of books every year?

Q. What is the value of "propaganda" literature which every minister gets through the mail?

A. Every minister receives a great deal of literature of this sort—tracts, pamphlets, periodicals, brochures, even books. Most of this material it would seem can be completely disregarded. That which appears useful should be read with a big grain of salt. In other words, a minister should be careful and discriminating in reading and utilizing the literature he receives on social issues (including, someone is bound to say, SOCIAL PROGRESS).

It is important to identify the source of this free material. A great deal of it comes from groups or from persons who represent an extreme point of view, either radical or reactionary. The Department of Social Education and Action is in a position to advise the ministers of our churches concerning many of the agencies that are seeking to propagandize the churches.

Q. What other "in-service" training is available to the minister in the field of social education and action?

A. Here are six suggestions:

1. Most of our ministers are in communities, or within easy driving distance of communities, that offer many exciting opportunities for "social education"—lectures and forums on a variety of subjects, discussion groups such as those sponsored by the American Foundation

for Political Education, extension courses on social and economic themes, field trips for "close-ups" of a number of social problems, open meetings of Alcoholics Anonymous, to name a few.

2. Worth-while courses on social education and action, both denominational and interdenominational, are featured in many area and regional summer schools and conferences for ministers. We would recommend especially the summer training schools sponsored by the Board of Christian Education of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., in which both basic and advanced courses in social education are offered. Courses of interest to ministers seeking further training in social education and action are also offered in ministers' conferences held every summer on the campuses of several leading theological seminaries.

3. Every year a hundred or more Presbyterian ministers attend citizenship seminars in Washington and United Nations seminars in New York. The Department of Social Education and Action sponsors, or helps to sponsor, several of these seminars every year. For information ministers may write to the Department or may get in touch with the Christian Education Field Director in their area.

4. For churchmen interested in particular areas of social concern, there are any number of opportunities for rather advanced training—the Presbyterian Institute of Industrial Relations, directed by Dr. Marshal Scott of the Board of National Missions of the Presbyterian Church in the U.S.A., the Summer School of Alcohol Studies at Yale University, a variety of institutes and conferences for specialized groups on the campuses of several of our state-supported universities and agricultural colleges.

5. A number of ministers have been extended leaves of absence or sabbaticals by their churches in order to do graduate study or to participate in "social action" projects. We believe that an increasing number of churches will see the great value of giving their ministers opportunities of this kind.

6. Travel can become an invaluable means of "in-service" training in social education and action. Many ministers, for example, have exchanged pulpits for two or three months or longer with ministers overseas. Every summer a great many churchmen from the United States take part in traveling seminars in the Middle East, in Alaska, in the American Southwest, in Europe, in Latin America. Occasionally a churchman with special skills may offer his time to one or another of the Mission Boards and render several months or even a year of useful service in a mission area, with his own church paying most of the expenses.

Q. What about "specializing"?

A. We believe that most ministers and other churchmen interested in social education and action will not want to "cover the water front" of issues and problems, but will wish to specialize in one or another area of social concern—international affairs, racial and cultural relations, economic problems, agriculture and conservation, the United Nations, the problems of alcohol, community improvement, the problems of education, political matters, human rights, civil liberties, the Biblical and theological bases for social action, the influence of the Presbyterian Church in public affairs. We would certainly recommend specializing to anyone who wishes to go beyond the "primary grade" in social education and action.

The Department of Social Education and Action would have useful suggestions for ministers or other churchmen who wish to focus their attention on selected issues or areas of concern.

Q. What is a good way to begin a season of rigorous reading and training in social education and action?

A. We suggest the discipline of accepting a teaching or a writing assignment on some phase of the social witness of the Church.

It is possible for a minister, with the help of his session, to launch a series of studies in his own church based, for example, on the Message and Reports of the Evanston Assembly of the World Council of Churches (using *Evanston Speaks* and *Every Church and Evanston*). Or he may undertake to write an article for a denominational or interdenominational magazine on some social problem which would require him to undertake considerable reading for preparation.

Reading Suggestions

The Bible and Our Common Life, by Huber F. Klemme. Department of Social Education and Action, 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania, 1953. $1.25.

Living Without Hate, by Alfred J. Marrow. Harper & Brothers, 1951. $3.50.

The Church and Social Responsibility, by J. Richard Spann. Abingdon Press, 1953. $2.75.

Religion in Crisis and Custom: A Sociological and Psychological Study, by Anton T. Boisen (with preface by Seward Hiltner). Harper & Brothers, 1955. $4.00.

Encounter with Revolution, by M. Richard Shaull. Association Press, 1955. $2.50.

How to Help an Alcoholic, by Clifford Earle. The Westminster Press, 1952. $1.50.

Essays in the Public Philosophy, by Walter Lippmann. Little, Brown & Co., 1955. $3.50.

The Organizational Revolution, by Kenneth E. Boulding. Harper & Brothers, 1953. $3.50.

An Almanac of Liberty, by William Douglas. Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1954. $5.50.

Guide to Community Action, by Mark S. Matthews. Harper & Brothers, 1954. $4.00.

Common Sense and World Affairs, by Dorothy Fosdick. Harcourt, Brace and Co., 1955. $3.50.

Christian Ethics and Moral Philosophy, by George F. Thomas. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955. $5.75.

Christian Ethics and Social Policy, by John C. Bennett. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1946. $2.00.

Guide to the Good Life, by William A. Spurrier. Charles Scribner's Sons, 1955. $3.50.

Faith and Freedom, by Barbara Ward. W. W. Norton & Company, Inc., 1954. $3.75.

Christianity, Diplomacy, and War, by Herbert Butterfield. Abingdon Press, 1953. $1.75.

The Church in Community Action, by Harvey Seifert. Abingdon Press, 1952. $2.75.

The Loyalty of Free Men, by Alan Barth. Pocket Books, Inc., 1951. 35 cents.

All these books are available from any Westminster Book Store.

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Suggestions for Study

Special issues of SOCIAL PROGRESS are available on request to the Department of Social Education and Action, 830 Witherspoon Building, Philadelphia 7, Pennsylvania. Each of the following issues deals with a specific social concern. Sessions, men's groups, women's groups, family night discussion groups, young people's groups may want to plan a series of studies on one or more of these issues.

January, 1955—*Segregation on Sunday?*

March, 1955—*Alcohol Re-examined*

June, 1955—*Prayers of Concern*

October, 1955—*The United Nations—After Ten Years*

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